

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior listings of claims in the application.

Listing Of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): An image sensing apparatus comprising:

a memory which stores a database formed by statistically processing information on a photographing frequency in association with object distance information and brightness information;

an acquisition device which acquires an object brightness value on the basis of image information sensed by an image sensing device; and

a control device which refers to said memory to detect an object distance having the highest photographing frequency among object distances corresponding to the acquired object brightness value, and controls image sensing operation on the basis of the detected object distance information.

Claim 2 (original): The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said control device sets a scanning range of a focus adjustment lens for determining an in-focus position by limiting the scanning range to a predetermined range including a selected object distance, and determines an in-focus position.

Claim 3 (original): The apparatus according to claim 2, wherein when no in-focus position can be determined, said control device drives and controls the focus adjustment lens to a position corresponding to the selected object distance.

Claim 4 (original): The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein when the acquired brightness value and an object distance corresponding to an in-focus position are not more than thresholds, said control device controls the image sensing operation to indoor image sensing operation.

Claim 5 (original): The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein as the indoor image sensing operation, an emission amount of test emission of emitting light in advance in order to set an emission amount of an illumination device for illuminating an object is set smaller than an outdoor emission amount.

Claim 6 (original): The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein as the indoor image sensing operation, an extraction range for extracting white image information from the image information sensed by the image sensing device in order to adjust white balance is made by said control device to differ from an outdoor extraction range.

Claim 7 (currently amended): An image sensing method comprising:

acquiring an object brightness value on the basis of image information sensed by an image sensing device;

referring to a memory which stores a database formed by statistically processing information on a photographing frequency in association with object distance information and brightness information, thereby detecting an object distance having the highest photographing frequency among object distances corresponding to the acquired object brightness value; and

controlling image sensing operation on the basis of the detected object distance information.

Claim 8 (original): The method according to claim 7, wherein as control of the image sensing operation, a scanning range of a focus adjustment lens for determining an in-focus position is set by limiting the scanning range to a predetermined range including a selected object distance, and an in-focus position is determined.

Claim 9 (original): The method according to claim 8, wherein as control of the image sensing operation, when no in-focus position can be determined, the focus adjustment lens is driven and controlled to a position corresponding to the selected object distance.

Claim 10 (original): The method according to claim 7, wherein as control of the image sensing operation, when the acquired brightness value and an object distance corresponding to an

in-focus position are not more than thresholds, the image sensing operation is controlled to indoor image sensing operation.

Claim 11 (original): The method according to claim 10, wherein as the indoor image sensing operation, an emission amount of test emission of emitting light in advance in order to set an emission amount of an illumination device for illuminating an object is set smaller than an outdoor emission amount.

Claim 12 (original): The method according to claim 10, wherein as the indoor image sensing operation, an extraction range for extracting white image information from the image information sensed by the image sensing device in order to adjust white balance is made to differ from an outdoor extraction range.

Claim 13 (canceled)

Claim 14 (currently amended): A computer readable storage medium which stores a program for realizing the image sensing method comprising: defined in claim 13

acquiring an object brightness value on the basis of image information sensed by an image sensing device;

referring to a memory which stores a database formed by statistically processing information on a photographing frequency in association with object distance information and brightness information, thereby detecting an object distance having the highest photographing frequency among object distances corresponding to the acquired object brightness value; and

controlling image sensing operation on the basis of the detected object distance information.

Claim 15 (withdrawn): An image sensing apparatus comprising:

a memory which stores information on a photographing frequency in association with object distance information and brightness information;

an acquisition device which acquires an object brightness value on the basis of image information sensed by an image sensing device; and

a control device which refers to said memory to control image sensing operation on the basis of object distance information having a high photographing frequency among object distances corresponding to the acquired object brightness value.

Claim 16 (withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 15, wherein said control device sets a scanning range of a focus adjustment lens for determining an in-focus position by limiting the scanning range to a predetermined range including a selected object distance, and determines an in-focus position.

Claim 17 (withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 16, wherein when no in-focus position can be determined, said control device drives and controls the focus adjustment lens to a position corresponding to the selected object distance.

Claim 18 (withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 15, wherein when the acquired brightness value and an object distance corresponding to an in-focus position are not more than thresholds, said control device controls the image sensing operation to indoor image sensing operation.

Claim 19 (withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 18, wherein as the indoor image sensing operation, an emission amount of test emission of emitting light in advance in order to set an emission amount of an illumination device for illuminating an object is set smaller than an outdoor emission amount.

Claim 20 (withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 18, wherein as the indoor image sensing operation, an extraction range for extracting white image information from the image information sensed by the image sensing device in order to adjust white balance is made by said control device to differ from an outdoor extraction range.

Claim 21 (withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 15, wherein said control device learns pieces of information on an object brightness value and an object distance for each

image sensed by the image sensing device, and stores the pieces of information as information in said memory.

Claim 22 (withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein when a photographed image is played back, said control device learns pieces of information on an object brightness value and an object distance corresponding to a selectively played-back image, and stores the pieces of information as information in said memory.

Claim 23 (withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said control device changes the threshold on the basis of an error between an emission amount predicted on the basis of an external light intensity value obtained by photometry before test emission and an object distance obtained by distance measurement, and an actual emission amount attained from a brightness value obtained by photometry along with test emission and an external light intensity value obtained by photometry before test emission.

Claim 24 (withdrawn): The apparatus according to claim 20, wherein said control device changes the threshold on the basis of color information of a photographed image sensed by the image sensing device.

Claim 25 (withdrawn): An image sensing method comprising:

acquiring an object brightness value on the basis of image information sensed by an image sensing device; and

referring to a memory which stores information on a photographing frequency in association with object distance information and brightness information, thereby controlling image sensing operation on the basis of object distance information having a high photographing frequency among object distances corresponding to the acquired object brightness value.

Claim 26 (withdrawn): A program wherein an image sensing method defined in claim 25 is realized.

Claim 27 (withdrawn): A storage medium storing a program defined in claim 26.